

Name: _____



Homework

Jewell Parker Rhodes didn't want to write *Ghost Boys*



Jewell Parker Rhodes described her process of writing *Ghost Boys*. “I think I resisted every step of the way writing this book,” she said. “The book was not my idea. It was my editor’s idea.”

Rhodes wrote 27 pages, and thought she was done. She said her first draft of the book “was just sadness. Jerome was shot. He died. We saw the bleakness in his family, went to the courthouse and saw the police officer was set free. And he had such rage and a sense that the world was unjust.”

Later, she came back to those 27 pages. She said, “That isn’t good enough. Because life is much more complicated. People are much more complicated. I think that I didn’t quite yet have that depth of compassion for all my characters. You know a fiction writer has to love all their characters.”

But how could Rhodes bring herself to love the character of Officer Moore? The answer came when she created the character of Sarah. She said, “Sarah would immediately humanize the police officer.”

But that wasn’t the only reason Rhodes included this character. She said, “It was important to me that there be Carlos as an Hispanic boy, Jerome as an African American boy, and this wondrous White girl, who through their multiethnic backgrounds are ready to move the world forward.”

Source: “Black Lives Matter for Middle Schoolers,” The Longest Shortest Time, May 2, 2018.

Clarify the following words from the passage.

“We saw the **bleakness** in his family.”

Think about how Jerome’s family felt after Jerome was killed. Use this information to clarify the word “bleakness.”

→ I think **bleakness** means _____

“And he had such rage and a sense that the world was **unjust**.”

Circle the base word in “unjust.” Use the base word to clarify the meaning of “unjust.” (Hint: Think about justice.)

→ I think **unjust** means _____

Homework, continued

“I think that I didn’t quite yet have that depth of **compassion** for all my characters. You know a fiction writer has to love all their characters.”

Circle the base word in “compassion.” Use the base word and the context to clarify the meaning of “compassion.”

→ I think **compassion** means _____

“Sarah would immediately **humanize** the police officer.”

Circle the base word in “humanize.” Use the base word to clarify the meaning of “humanize.”

→ I think **humanize** means _____

What might it mean that Sarah would “humanize” the police officer?

I think it would mean _____

“It was important to me that there be Carlos as an Hispanic boy, Jerome as an African American boy, and this wondrous White girl, who through their **multiethnic** backgrounds are ready to move the world forward.”

Circle the base word in “multiethnic.” Use the base word and the context to clarify the meaning of “multiethnic.”

→ I think **multiethnic** means _____

What do you think it would have been like to read Jewell Parker Rhodes’ first 27 pages? Do you think it would have been a better or a worse book than *Ghost Boys*?

I think it would be better worse because
